

NEWS BRIEFING

ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARTHUR SYLVESTER

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The Pentagon

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10:35 A.M.

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October 26, 1962

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MR. SYLVESTER: Good morning, gentlemen.

May I read this through once uninterruptedly? For those who get left behind, I will resume more slowly.

"The Navy has intercepted and boarded the MARUCLA, a freighter registered under the Lebanese flag, and bound for Cuba. It is out of the Baltic port of Riga under Soviet charter.

"The boarding party, composed of personnel from the destroyer JOSEPH P. KENNEDY and the destroyer PIERCE, was still aboard the MARUCLA at 10:20 a.m. (EDT).

"First reports from the scene indicate that cooperation on the part of the freighter personnel was good. Until the boarding party returns after having looked at the manifest, searched the ship, inspected the cargo, and interrogated the personnel, we cannot be sure of its point of origin or the composition of the cargo. The boarding took place at 7:50 a.m., (EDT). The MARUCLA was approximately 180 miles northeast of Nassau. The schedule of events follows:

"At 7:24, forces from both destroyers received instructions to board.

"At 7:29, USS KENNEDY lowered whale boat.

"At 7:32, MARUCLA lowered Jacobs ladder over side.

"At 7:36, KENNEDY whale boat underway to freighter.

"At 7:39, whale boat approaching freighter.

"At 7:46, whale boat alongside and boarding.

"At 7:50, boarding party aboard.

"The executive officers of the KENNEDY and PIERCE were leading the party. The first message received from the boarding party read as follows:

"'Party aboard MARUCLA at 7:50. Cooperation good. No difficulties expected.'

"Lloyd's Registry lists the MARUCLA's tonnage as 7,268 gross tons. Its length 441 feet, 8 inches, and reveals that it was built in 1943. Lloyd's says the MARUCLA is 57 feet wide with a draft of 27 feet.

"The boarding party was headed by the executive officer from the PIERCE, who is Lt. Commander Dwight G. Osborne, of East Paterson, New Jersey. The KENNEDY executive officer leading the boarding party was Lt. Commander Kenneth C. Reynolds, of Coronado, California. The commanding officer of the PIERCE was Commander James W. Foust, of Greensburg, Pennsylvania. The KENNEDY is commanded by Commander Nicholas Mikhalevsky, Staten Island, New York."

QUESTION: Will you spell the freighter's name?

MR. SYLVESTER: The spelling of the freighter MARUCLA.

QUESTION: Spell it again, please.

MR. SYLVESTER: M-A-R-U-C-L-A.

QUESTION: Is it the second intercept so far?

MR. SYLVESTER: This is the second intercept.

QUESTION: Did you say that the KENNEDY Executive Officer was Reynolds?

MR. SYLVESTER: The KENNEDY Executive Officer is Lieutenant Commander Kenneth C. Reynolds, Coronado, California.

QUESTION: How do you spell Pierce?

MR. SYLVESTER: P-I-E-R-C-E.

QUESTION: OSBORNE?

MR. SYLVESTER: Correct.

QUESTION: Have you established the ownership of this freighter?

MR. SYLVESTER: We said that it is under Soviet charter and has a Lebanese registry.

QUESTION: Under Soviet charter?

MR. SYLVESTER: Yes.

QUESTION: Could you go through and spell all the names involved so we will be sure we will get them? Read the whole thing slowly.

MR. SYLVESTER: "The Navy has intercepted and boarded the MARUCLA, a freighter registered under the Lebanese flag and bound for Cuba. It is out of the Baltic port of Riga."

QUESTION: Will you spell that?

MR. SYLVESTER: R-I-G-A.

"...under Soviet charter. The boarding party, composed of personnel from the destroyer JOSEPH P. KENNEDY and destroyer PIERCE ..."

QUESTION: You don't have a first name on PIERCE, do you?

MR. SYLVESTER: No.

"...was still aboard the MARUCLA at 10:20."

After this session I hope to get down and find out what the boarding party reported.

QUESTION: 10:20 a.m.?

MR. SYLVESTER: 10:20 a.m., (EDT), this morning.

QUESTION: All times are Eastern Daylight?

MR. SYLVESTER: All times are Eastern Daylight Time.

"First reports from the scene indicate that cooperation on the part of the freighter personnel was good.

"Until the boarding party returned after having looked at the manifest, searched the ship, inspected the cargo and interrogated the personnel, we cannot be sure of the composition of the cargo.

"The boarding took place at 7:50 a.m., (EDT), approximately 180 miles northeast of Nassau."

Lloyd's Registry lists the MARUCLA's tonnage as 7,628 gross tons, its length 441 feet, 8 inches. Its width 57 feet, its draft 27 feet. Lloyd's says it was built in 1954.

QUESTION: This is obviously a dry cargo ship?

MR. SYLVESTER: Until the boarding party comes back I frankly can't tell you.

QUESTION: Did you say where it was built?

MR. SYLVESTER: I don't have that. This was done rather fast.

QUESTION: But it is a freighter, not a tanker?

MR. SYLVESTER: That is right.

QUESTION: The fact that it is of Lebanese registry makes it certain this is Lebanese crew or skipper?

MR. SYLVESTER: It makes nothing certain. Until the boarding party comes back and I get down and hear what their report is I can't answer these questions.

The boarding party from the PIERCE was led by Lt. Commander Dwight G. Osborne, of East Paterson, New Jersey, and the JOSEPH P. KENNEDY's Executive Officer, who led their party, was Lt. Commander Kenneth C. Reynolds, Coronado, California. The Commanding Officer of the PIERCE is Commander James W. Foust, of Greensburg, Pennsylvania. The KENNEDY's Commanding Officer, Commander Nicholas Mikhalevsky, and I shall spell his name, Mikhalevsky, Staten Island, New York.

QUESTION: Is Nicholas spelled "c-h"?

MR. SYLVESTER: Right.

The following log of the actions leading up to the boarding runs like this:

"7:24 a.m., Eastern Daylight Time, forces received instructions to board."

QUESTION: From where?

MR. SYLVESTER: From the commanders of the destroyers.

"7:29, USS KENNEDY lowered whale boat.

"7:32, MARUCLA lowered Jacob's ladder over side.

"7:36, KENNEDY whale boat underway to freighter.

"7:39, whale boat approaching freighter.

"7:46, whale boat alongside and boarding.

"7:50, boarding party aboard.

QUESTION: I assume this means that the KENNEDY was the one that went aboard first?

MR. SYLVESTER: Let me run this down again.

"Boarding party aboard. The executive officers of the KENNEDY and PIERCE leading party." That includes the combined party.

QUESTION: You only have a whale boat from KENNEDY. How about the PIERCE?

MR. SYLVESTER: Look, this is just happening. I will try to get these answers.

First message from the MARUCLA after the boarding,

"Party aboard MARUCLA at 7:50. Cooperation good. No difficulties expected."

QUESTION: Did that message come from the boarding party?

MR. SYLVESTER: It came from the boarding party and came into the Navy Plot Room here.

QUESTION: Did it go through the PIERCE or the KENNEDY?

MR. SYLVESTER: I can't tell you offhand. We'll find it out.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

EXTRACT FOLLOWS

NEWS RELEASE

PLEASE NOTE DATE



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Washington 25, D. C.

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 26, 1962

NO. 1745-62
OX 5-3201, 5-3176

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TEXT OF ANNOUNCEMENT BY SECRETARY SYLVESTER:

The Navy has intercepted and boarded the MARUCLA, a freighter registered under the Lebanese flag and bound for Cuba. It is out of the Baltic port of Riga, under Soviet charter.

The boarding party, composed of personnel from the destroyer JOSEPH P. KENNEDY and the destroyer PIERCE was still aboard the MARUCLA at 10:20 AM EDT.

First reports from the scene indicate that cooperation on the part of the freighter personnel was good.

Until the boarding party returns, after having looked at the manifest, searched the ship, inspected the cargo and interrogated the personnel, we cannot be sure of the composition of the cargo.

The boarding took place at 7:50 AM EDT 180 miles northeast of Nassau.

The boarding party was led by the Executive Officer of the PIERCE whose name is Lieutenant Commander Dwight G. Osborne, of East Patterson, New Jersey, and the Executive Officer of the KENNEDY, Lieutenant Commander Kenneth C. Reynolds, of Coronado, California. The Commanding Officers of the two vessels are CDR James W. Foust, of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, of the PIERCE, and CDR Nicholas "N" Mikhalevsky, of Staten Island, New York, of the KENNEDY.

Chronology of the events follows (all times EDT):

- 0724 Forces received instruction to board.
- 0729 USS KENNEDY (DD850) lowered whale boat.
- 0732 MARUCLA lowered Jacob's ladder over side.
- 0736 USS KENNEDY whale boat underway to freighter.
- 0739 Whale boat approaching freighter.
- 0746 Whale boat alongside and boarding.
- 0750 Boarding party aboard. The Executive Officers of the USS KENNEDY and USS PIERCE leading party.

First message after boarding:

"Party aboard MARUCLA at 0750. Cooperation good. No difficulties expected."

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